Import duty on aluminium ingots

2319. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether import duty on aluminium ingots is 0 to 5 per cent in Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and 5 to 10 per cent in SAARC countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal;

(b) whether it is a fact that as per WTO norms commodities from any country should not be exported at less than the domestic price, whereas Indian producers are exporting at Rs. 63,000/-PMT against domestic price of Rs. 83,000/-PMT; and

(c) If the answer to parts (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, the reasons for keeping very high rate of effective import duty at 30.8 per cent (total)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE : (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. However, in the case of Nepal Import duty was 15% (during 1998-99).

(b) The provisions of the WTO Agreement allow an anti-dumping measure to be applied after necessary investigations if the product of one country is exported to another country at less than the normal value and if it causes or threatens to cause material injury to the domestic industry in the importing country.

(c) The import duty rates are decided after taking into account all relevant factors, and the Government has decided to maintain the existing duty on aluminium.

Exchange rates of external debts

2320. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) what are the reasons for Government reckoning their external debts at historical exchange rates rather than at the current exchange rates in the budgets; and

(b) if so, whether it represents accurate picture of our current external debts?